

## St James the Great, Cradley

Minutes of PCC meeting – 21 March 2025 at 19.30

Held at Reafields, courtesy of Chris and Di Roberts

Present: Mike Hames [in the chair], Jane MacFarlane, Peter and Sue Warner, Ian and Sue Bailey, Chris and Di Roberts, Margaret Edgar, John Parsons

1. The meeting began with a prayer at 19.35
2. There were apologies from Eryl Copp, and the Rector
3. There were no declarations of interest
4. Ian signed the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.
5. Matters Arising

Mike reported that he has applied for grants towards the restoration on the chest.

He also said that the resurfacing of the remainder of Rectory Lane will take place, but that no date for the work has been given.

Mike also noted that the next meeting of the Hereford branch of 'Save the Parish' is on Wed 14 May.

### 6. Reports

#### 6a Fabric                      See report

Sue alerted the meeting to the need for a second vestry key, especially in view of the imminent work on the new WC. The key is large, and old, and would have to be hand-made. 'Lock, Stock and Barrel' of Hereford are able to do this for £100, and all were agreed that this should be done.

Ian reported that the quote for the work to the roof seems quite high, and so he will obtain an alternative quote.

Stephen Baggs made some recommendations in his Triennial Review regarding testing the timbers in tower for safety. Concern was expressed about the potential cost of this, and it was decided that the opinion of Jane Chamberlain, of Caroe & Partners, would be sought before going ahead.

Sue Bailey proposed and Margaret Edgar seconded that Jane Chamberlain of Caroe & Partners should continue in her role as architect for the Quinquennial Inspection. This was agreed unanimously.

#### 6b Wardens                      See report.

Ian noted that he has found a cheaper quote for the servicing of the fire extinguishers.

#### 6c Treasurer                      See report

#### 6d Churchyard                      See report

Ian raised a concern that the grass area [shaded blue] could become unruly and prevent easy access to graves in the summer if not mown for the proposed 3 months. It was decided that the grass should be mown short not only around the graves themselves, but also to form 'paths', so that visitors can easily access them.

Mike raised the point that the area just outside the lychgate is not strictly-speaking church land, although it has historically been laid to grass. He said this needs to be borne in mind, not only for the siting of the planter, but also with regard to the siting of a new church notice board.

Peter has found a company [Greenbarns] who specialise in church noticeboards and encouraged members to have a look at their website. John mentioned that he'd recommended this company to the PCC about a year ago, and reiterated that the company in Leigh Sinton, who made the noticeboard for Storridge Church, charge about the same price as Greenbarns.

#### 6e Outreach and Events

AV evening: Ian confirmed that the hire of the school hall is very reasonable, so he and Peter will evaluate its suitability for the event.

The St David's Day concert was thought to be a great success, and that it should happen again next year, if possible.

Helpers are needed for stalls and refreshments for the Plant Sale Day on 5 May.

Two more gardens are sought for the Open Gardens weekend.

John mentioned that he is in communication about a date for his concert with Carl Attwood, and will confirm a date for the early autumn in due course.

#### 6f Deanery Synod. See report

Mike brought attention to the intention of the General Synod to put pressure on the Church Commissioners to release funds for priests for rural parishes.

#### 6g Working Party for the Vacancy See minutes

John noted that the choir isn't mentioned in the section on Music, and requested that it be added.

When the Benefice meeting takes place, the Cradley team will be joined by members from Mathon [Paul Seymour and Jane Cutler] and Storridge [Janita Goodwin and Mark Higgins]

All were agreed that the group has made a very good start.

### 7. Annual Report

An addendum regarding safeguarding has been added to the end of the annual report, to the effect that the PCC has complied with the requirements imposed by the code under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

### 8. Impending Elections

Eryl Copp and Sue Warner are approaching the end of their 3-yr stints on the PCC, but it is hoped and expected that they will be willing to continue.

### 9. Electoral Roll

Mike has approached several people about signing up. As it stands there are about 40 names on the list. He underlined the importance of having at least 50 names on the list, as this increases the potential number of people it's possible to have on the PCC and its various sub-committees. Mike volunteered to make an appeal at the Mothering Sunday service for people to sign up to the electoral roll. All were agreed that this was a good idea.

### 10. Triennial Inspection. See report

The report is impressive, showing the church in a good light, and all were agreed that all credit goes to our wonderful Churchwardens for their superb and tireless work.

The inspector, Stephen Baggs, suggested that the lovely old Baptismal Register should perhaps be stored at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre [HARC], but all were in favour of its continued secure storage in the vestry.

11. Data breaches

Maureen has had a complaint regarding a data breach on multi-recipient emails. Sue exhorted us all to BCC any such emails, and also to include a sentence to offer people the option of being removed from the list.

12. Health and Safety. There were no entries in the accident book.

13. Safeguarding. There were no items to discuss.

14. AOB

Mike proposed, and Jane seconded, that the Fabric Committee should discuss the health and safety and fabric issues raised by Stephen Baggs and report back to the PCC in due course.

Peter reported back from the recent Village Hall/Parish Council meeting, and said that the Parish Council intends to cut its grant to the Village Hall from £3,900 to £2,000. This has caused much concern, and will have a major impact on the continuing viability of the Village Hall, and its community role in Cradley.

Ian spoke about live streaming services. He said the 'interface unit' is beyond repair, and a new unit would cost £93. Apparently only two couples watch online, and one of those comes to church in person on a reasonably regular basis. John said that, in view of the small number of people viewing, and the cost of new equipment, it is in his opinion not worth pursuing. Furthermore, apparently there are frequently as many as 30 people listening on the phone. It has been requested that these people make themselves known to the church, but none has been forthcoming. John suggested that an announcement be made at the next live-streamed service, to say that the church will terminate the phone service unless sufficient numbers of listeners contact the church to request its continuance. Ian will make this announcement on Palm Sunday.

Meanwhile, Peter has generously offered to lend the church his unit, for the time being, and until a firm decision regarding live streaming has been made.

Ian was proposed for election to Churchwarden by Peter, seconded by Margaret, and Di proposed by Mike and seconded by Jane. They will be elected, it is hoped, at the Vestry Meeting, immediately prior to the APCM.

Sheila is collecting cash donations for Robert's leaving present, but in order to avoid her using her own bank account, it was decided to open a protected retirement fund, so that donors will, as an alternative, be able to transfer donations by BACS directly into the 'Cradley PCC' account.

15. Dates of future meetings:

APCM            Sunday 13 April, followed by a PCC meeting.

PCC             Monday 12 May. Reafields, at 7.30

The meeting closed with a prayer and the grace at 21.48

Signed.....

Date.....